

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 27, 44 and 45, without prejudice. Please amend claims 24, 25, 31, 38, and 46. Please add new claims 47 and 48 as shown below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

Claims 1-23 (cancelled)

Claim 24 (currently amended): A cover for a welding wire container having an upper surface provided with ~~[[a]]~~ an elongated slot through which ~~[[the]]~~ welding wire can be withdrawn from the container, and having a spacer which ~~defines~~ divides the slot into an inner portion and an outer portion ~~of the slot~~ such that welding wire extending through the inner portion of the slot is held spaced from welding wire extending through the outer portion of the slot.

Claim 25 (currently amended): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed ~~such as~~ its spacing effect can be overcome of a material that is rupturable by the welding wire.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is attached to the cover so as to be at least partially detachable from the cover.

Claim 27 (cancelled)

Claim 28 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed so as to be deflectable such that the welding wire is allowed to pass the spacer when the spacer is in a deflected condition.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed from an adhesive strip.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed from a label attached to the cover.

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Claim 31 (currently amended): The cover of claim 29, wherein the spacer is ~~formed from~~ comprises an inner label and an outer label.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The cover of claim 31, wherein the inner and outer labels each have an opening for the welding wire.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The cover of claim 29, wherein the spacer is formed from a single adhesive strip.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is a plate attached to an upper surface of the cover.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The cover of claim 34, wherein the plate is attached to the upper surface of the cover on one side of the slot only.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed of plastic.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer comprises at least one narrow portion of the slot at which edges of the slot are arranged opposite each other with a distance which is smaller than a diameter of the welding wire.

Claim 38 (currently amended): The cover of claim 24, wherein the slot extends from adjacent an edge of the cover towards and beyond a center of the cover.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein an elevated portion is provided in a center of the cover.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The cover of claim 39, wherein the elevated portion has a shape of a truncated cone.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The cover of claim 39, wherein the elevated portion has a shape of a truncated pyramid.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The cover of claim 41, wherein the slot crosses one side surface and a top surface of the truncated pyramid and extends over almost an entire opposite side surface of the truncated pyramid.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The cover of claim 24, wherein the slot has a width of approximately 20 mm.

Claims 44-45 (cancelled)

Claim 46 (currently amended): The welding wire container of claim [[44]] 47, wherein the spacer is arranged inside the body close to the opening.

Claim 47 (new): A welding wire container having a hollow body containing a coil of welding wire, said container having an elongated opening in a top surface thereof through which one end of the coil of welding wire can be withdrawn from the container, said container further having a spacer over the opening which separates the one end of the coil of welding wire from the other end of the coil of the welding wire, wherein the other end of the coil of the welding wire leads to another welding wire container.

Claim 48 (new): The welding wire container of claim 47, wherein the top surface of the container comprises a removable cover.